Conditions for the Great Religion Singularity

Brian D. McLaren,
The Convergence Network

Abstract: Applying the Buddhist "law of interdependent origination," which states that if the conditions are right, a particular phenomenon may exist, Brian McLaren provides ten conditional factors that he believes have contributed to Ken Howard's "religion singularity" (i.e. the multi-faceted collapse of institutional Christianity). Each condition falls under two main categories: either a lack of rapid adaptability in religious institutions or the moral failure of institutional leaders. The ten conditional factors include authoritarian centralization, betrayal of the religious founder's non-violence, a history of unacknowledged atrocities, military imperialism, white supremacy, scandals, reaction against scientific inquiry, doubling down on dualism, integrated and change-averse institutional systems, and paralysis and nostalgia.

Keywords: Religion Singularity, Interdependent Origination, Institutional Christianity, Adaptability, Moral Failure

Introduction

ONE OF BUDDHISM'S MANY gifts to the world is the principle of *pratityasamutpada,* which is sometimes named negatively as the "law of no independent origination" but is, perhaps, better translated positively as the "law of interdependent origination."[1] Like profound Christian mysteries such as the Trinity or *creatio continua*, or the transforming power of faith, this Buddhist teaching has many levels of meaning and has engendered all kinds of controversy. But one incontrovertible dimension of the teaching can be simply stated: if the conditions are right, something may exist. If the conditions are not right, it will not exist. In other words, the existence of anything is dependent on the conditions that produce it or on the conditions that it requires, and everything that exists is interdependent with its environment.[2]

Jesus articulated something similar in his parable of the soils (Mark 4:3–20). Even good seed will not grow unless the conditions are right, such as fertile soil, sufficient depth to retain moisture, absence of weeds that would compete for nutrients and sunlight, and so on. The parable goes beyond Paul's dictum that we reap what we sow, suggesting that even if we sow good seed, unsuitable external conditions can preclude a good harvest. The teachings of both Jesus and the Buddha invite us to step beyond our simple linear concepts of causality in order to think in deeper terms of sufficient conditions and, deeper still, in terms of webs or systems of interdependent conditions.

---

[1] For a brief summary of this principle, including why, in Buddhism, it is often linked to atheism, see Barbara O'Brien, "The Principle of Dependent Origination in Buddhism," ThoughtCo, April 5, 2018, https://www.thoughtco.com/dependent-origination-meaning-449723.

[2] Cf. Ewing Chinn, "Nāgārjuna's Fundamental Doctrine of *Pratītyasamutpāda*," *Philosophy East and West* 51, no. 1 (January 2001): 54–72, https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2001.0005.

WIPF *and* STOCK *Publishers*

The "religion singularity," as predicted by Ken Howard, is based on two observations, and each observation is interdependent with a number of interactive conditions that contributed to it. First, traditional religious engagement is declining in most parts of the West. Second, as engagement has been declining, the number of religious institutions has been rising. These two seemingly contradictory realities create the conditions for a new predicted reality: a religion singularity when religious institutions collapse or implode in large numbers.[3]

The first observation regarding the decline in religious engagement in the West has been widely researched and theories abound as to its causes. The second observation regarding the rising number of religious institutions has, to my knowledge, received less attention. Keeping the principle of interdependent origination in mind, I would suggest that a complex and dynamic set of conditions has led to these two observations, rendering the *Great Religion Singularity* (i.e. a multi-faceted collapse of institutional Christianity) not only possible, but virtually inevitable, barring the sudden rise of other radically disruptive conditions.[4]

These many specific and complexly interrelated conditions can be, I believe, organized under two general headings:

General Condition A (GCA): Institutional Brittleness; the lack of rapid adaptability in all major religious institutions, coupled with a rapidly changing environment, has led to a growing sense of cultural irrelevance and unfitness, resulting in declining religious retention in each generation, with cascading effects.

General Condition B (GCB): Moral Failure; the notable moral failures of religious leaders, members, and whole communities, leading to a fresh analysis of moral failures across history, which has made claims of one religion's spiritual supremacy over others literally incredible and ethically reprehensible.

Below, I will survey ten more specific examples of these general conditions.[5] I will also include "GCA" or "GCB" in parentheses to indicate which general condition is most linked to each example. Obviously, these specific examples could be explored to more and more granular levels of specificity. Here are some of the conditions that I see creating the backdrop for a *Great Religion Singularity* in the near future.

1. Authoritarian Centralization

Relatively early in its history, Christianity experienced a centrifugal force as charismatic leaders arose in response to political, economic, and other conditions. These *ad hoc* leaders formed various sects that decentralized the young faith. For example, in addition to a center in

---

[3] Kenneth W. Howard, "The Religion Singularity: A Demographic Crisis Destabilizing and Transforming Institutional Christianity," *International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society* 7, no. 2 (2017): 77–93, http://dx.doi.org/10.18848/2154-8633/cgp/v07i02/77-93.

[4] Such disruptive conditions might include nuclear, biological, or chemical warfare, an unforeseen planetary catastrophe, or something else entirely.

[5] I focus my attention here on Christianity (or Christianities) as the West's primary religious heritage, although conditions that affect Christianity often affect other traditions, as well.

Jerusalem associated with James, a new center emerged in Antioch, associated with Paul.[6] This multi-centeredness, flexibility, and adaptability are characteristic of a vibrant movement.

However, in response, institutional leaders struggled to consolidate power, regulate doctrine and liturgy, and maintain a sense of unity over Christianity's first few centuries. Unity was maintained by articulating essential doctrines, liturgical forms, and systems of authority (polity). Anyone who challenged these doctrines, liturgies, and polities was deemed a "heretic" (i.e. one who makes his own choices, as opposed to acquiescing to the choices made by institutional leaders). Heretics were subject to excommunication, imprisonment, torture, banishment, or death. This centralizing and authoritarian response was inherently conservative and made adaptation difficult, chiefly since adaptation equals change, and change equals heresy, and heresy carries the risk of great punishment.[7] (GCA)

2. Betrayal of Its Founder's Non-Violence

Sociologically, many streams of early Christianity adopted a non-Jewish identity and an anti-Semitic tone very early on.[8] The reasons for this turn are many and complex, as detailed by Kwame Bediako and others.[9] While some early Christians maintained a strong link with the Jewishness of their founder, others identified more with Greco-Roman culture, others with barbarian culture, and still others with a charismatic leader and his/her prejudices, etc. Together, they adopted various forms of supersessionism, claiming Christians had replaced the Jews as "God's chosen people."[10]

As a result, by the fourth century, Roman Christianity was decidedly anti-Semitic, and often violently so.[11] A long and tragic saga of anti-Semitic violence continued through the Reformation and culminated in the Holocaust, which the Christian faith has yet to fully acknowledge and repent of its complicity. Since being "postmodern" means to be post-Holocaust, this largely unacknowledged anti-Semitic history has undermined the credibility of Christianity, particularly over the last few generations.[12] (GCB)

3. History of Unacknowledged Atrocities

Institutional Christianity's early anti-Semitic turn represented a profound betrayal of the non-violent love-ethic of the religion's founder, Jesus Christ, which would pave the way for a

---

[6] See Ray S. Anderson, *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 12–15, 21–24, 51–52, 203–5. For diversity in the following generations of Christian leaders, see Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture Upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modern Africa*, Regnum Studies in Mission (1999; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011).

[7] Harvey Cox, *The Future of Faith* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 99–111. See also Vincent Donovan's analysis of current homogenizing and centralizing tendencies in Vincent J. Donovan, *The Church in the Midst of Creation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989).

[8] See Kenneth W. Howard, *Excommunicating the Faithful: Jewish Christianity in the Early Church*, 3rd ed. (Germantown, MD: FaithX Press, 2013).

[9] See Bediako, *Theology and Identity*, esp. 114–15.

[10] Cf. Seth Postell, "The Relevance of Jewish Identity for Ecclesiology," *Faith and Mission* 21, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 5–21.

[11] See James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, a History* (New York: Mariner Books, 2002).

[12] Cf. Michael E. Lodahl, "Christo-Praxis: Foundations for a Post-Holocaust Ethical Christology," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 30, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 213–25.

widening range of moral atrocities in the centuries to come, from sustained episodes of ethnic cleansing and genocide, to the longstanding suppression of women, to the church's complex and acrimonious relationship with LGBTQ persons. In the post-Holocaust era, as anti-Semitism became a source of shame, Western Christians seemed to lack a foil, and many shifted the focus of their animus from Jews to Muslims (in general) and Arabs (in particular). In an increasingly pluralistic world, this religious animus further undermines Christianity's credibility in the early twenty-first century.[13] (GCB)

4. Military Imperialism

Very early on, institutional Christianity further distanced itself from the non-violent ethic of its founder when its bishops submitted to Emperor Constantine. The cross, which had originally symbolized the extreme violence of Rome, had been inverted by these Christians to symbolize nonviolent love, forgiveness, and reconciliation between God and humanity. But with Constantine's conversion to Christianity, Jesus' subversion was itself subverted, and the cross once again became a symbol of imperial domination and all that it entailed. In this way, the bishops boosted the empire's power as a military and economic force, swelled the church's coffers, and raised the church's social status. In so doing, however, they drained the Christian faith of much of its moral authority and ethical distinctiveness.[14]

Of particular note, the same imperialistic urge to violently dominate "the other" has shown itself to be interdependent with an urge to violently dominate the earth, as well, leaving Christianity complicit in its contemporary ecological crises and impending climate catastrophe. The glaring failure of the church, so far at least, to challenge effectively the imperial economy's exploitation of the earth will likely become an increasingly significant reason for its marginalization in the years ahead.[15] (GCB)

5. White Supremacy

As institutional Christianity became more and more centered in Europe, it became increasingly racialized as a white religion. This racialization was powerfully intensified with the Doctrine of Discovery in the mid-fifteenth century. The Doctrine of Discovery authorized the white Christian kings of Europe to go into the world and make slaves of all non-Christian nations, confiscating their wealth, resources, and labor. It also created a series of European "Christian" empires, including, most notably, the Spanish and British Empires that covered vast

---

[13] I address some of these atrocities in Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions That Are Transforming the Faith*, Pbk. ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2011) and *The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World's Largest Religion Is Seeking a Better Way to Be Christian* (New York: Convergent Books, 2016). See also, Mae Elise Cannon et al., *Forgive Us: Confessions of a Compromised Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014) and Bruxy Cavey, *The End of Religion: Encountering the Subversive Spirituality of Jesus* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2007), esp. 57–69.

[14] For more on Christian faith and militarism, see Brian Zahnd, *A Farewell to Mars: An Evangelical Pastor's Journey Toward the Biblical Gospel of Peace* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2014) and *Postcards from Babylon: The Church in American Exile* (St. Joseph, MO: Spello Press, 2019).

[15] Cf. Mark I. Wallace, "The New Green Christianity: Why the Church Is Vital to Saving the Planet," *Word and World* 28, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 75–85.

parts of the globe until the 1970s.[16] In a long process, starting with the abolition movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and then again in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, white supremacy has been exposed (even among many white people) as a crime against humanity. The continuing (often unconscious) embrace of white supremacy (evidenced in the infamous 80% of white evangelicals who supported Donald Trump's racist 2016 presidential campaign) has further eroded the moral standing of Western Christianity.[17] (GCB)

6. Scandals

With the rise of investigative journalism and the ubiquity of uncensored mass and social media, a series of religious scandals have been highly publicized in recent decades, from the financial and sexual misdeeds of Protestant televangelists in the 1990s to the pedophilia and cover-ups of Catholic and Southern Baptist hierarchy more recently.[18] No doubt, similar scandals occurred throughout Christian history, but reports were more easily suppressed when the church occupied a more influential position in society and when the media was more easily censored. Now, to see clergy shame people for abortion or LGBTQ identity, while they are covering up their own heinous actions, rightly disaffects millions from their churches and adds to the growing category of the SBNR ("spiritual but not religious") category. (GCB)

7. Reaction Against Scientific Inquiry

Meanwhile, the church has been in a reactionary mode in relation to science for over five centuries. The Roman Catholic Church's response to Copernicus and Galileo was echoed by most Protestants, and the dual doctrines of biblical inerrancy and papal infallibility were articulated during this period as a bulwark against scientific challenges to ecclesial dogma. While claims of infallibility or inerrancy may have strengthened the loyalty of insiders, they also created an exodus of people who found such claims intellectually dishonest. Increasingly, the universe described by many sectors of the church—6,000 years old, created by fiat in six literal days—became untenable for those who saw the Big Bang, an expanding universe, and biological evolution as being more honest and more likely than church dogma.[19] (GCA)

---

[16] For more on the Doctrine of Discovery, see McLaren, *The Great Spiritual Migration*, 71–123.

[17] Cf. Stephen Mansfield, *Choosing Donald Trump: God, Anger, Hope, and Why Christian Conservatives Supported Him* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017); "No, That New Study Doesn't Debunk the Stat About 80 Percent of White Evangelicals Voting for Trump," Relevant, October 18, 2018, https://relevantmagazine.com/culture/politics-culture/no-that-new-study-doesnt-debunk-the-stat-about-80-percent-of-white-evangelicals-voting-for-trump/; and Kevin S. Seybold, "A Cultural Cognition Perspective on Religion Singularity: How Political Identity Influences Religious Affiliation," *Socio-Historical Examination of Religion and Ministry* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 21–28, https://doi.org/10.33929/sherm.2019.vol1.no1.03.

[18] See for example, Laurie Goodstein and Sharon Otterman, "Catholic Priests Abused 1,000 Children in Pennsylvania, Report Says," *New York Times*, August 14, 2018, nytimes.com/2018/08/14/us/catholic-church-sex-abuse-pennsylvania.html; Elvia Malagon, "More Than 500 Priests Accused of Sexual Abuse Not yet Publicly Identified by Catholic Church, Illinois Attorney General Finds," *Chicago Tribune*, December 20, 2018, chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-met-illinois-attorney-general-catholic-priest-abuse-20181219-story.html; and Robert Downen, Lise Olsen, and John Tedesco, "Abuse of Faith," *Houston Chronicle*, February 10, 2019, houstonchronicle.com/news/investigations/article/Southern-Baptist-sexual-abuse-spreads-as-leaders-13588038.php.

[19] Cf. Antony Alumkal, *Paranoid Science: The Christian Right's War on Reality* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1ggjjcz.

8. Doubling Down on Dualism

On a more philosophical level, institutional Christianity had very early on aligned itself with various forms of Neoplatonism. This philosophical commitment assumed that creation had two components: a spiritual component of ideal and immutable essences that included souls, moral laws, etc., a material component that included everything else.[20] This dualistic outlook presented the human being as a ghost in a machine, a spiritual essence inhabiting a material body. As scientific descriptions of the human being developed in recent centuries, through Darwin, Freud, and, more recently, neurobiology, this dualistic anthropological model has become unstable, unconvincing, and in many cases, untenable. Religious leaders have struggled to come to terms with the implications of these anthropological shifts in areas of sexuality, mental illness, psycho-pharmacology, and heuristics.[21] As a result, as is the case with the outer universe, the inner universe described by religious communities has felt increasingly distant from and irreconcilable with the universe understood and experienced by millions of people, driving them away from religious communities. While Christian scholars have grappled creatively and responsibly with these challenges, their work has been suppressed both intentionally and unconsciously, and the traditional language of liturgy and hymns has further reified the old dualistic framework. (GCA)

9. Integrated and Change-Averse Institutional Systems

The church, like any living organism, has evolved over time. It represents a complex aggregation of symbiotic systems. Sophisticated public relations, government relations, internal governance, economic, communication, education, service, property management, and investment systems (among others) brought many modern church institutions to their pinnacle of influence, wealth, and power in the early to mid-twentieth century. However, the systems of late-modern civilization have been changing with extreme speed, and many church systems have been unable to keep pace.

For example, a single technical advance, the tractor, led to profound changes in agriculture, with the small family farm giving way to huge agri-business enterprises. As a result, thousands of small towns have shrunk as farm labor was replaced by automation and millions migrated to urban centers to find new kinds of work. Today, denominations continue to send ministers to the buildings they erected in these once-thriving rural communities, even though the people have moved away. They have failed to anticipate these changes and devise pro-active responses that would both serve those who remain in rural areas and connect with the urbanizing majority. (GCA)

---

[20] See John Dillon, "Logos and Trinity: Patterns of Platonist Influence on Early Christianity," in *The Philosophy in Christianity*, ed. Godfrey Vesey, Royal Institute of Philosophy Lecture Series 25 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1–13, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0957042x00011214; Thomas E. Gaston, "The Influence of Platonism on the Early Apologists," *Heythrop Journal: A Bimonthly Review of Philosophy and Theology* 50, no. 4 (July 2009): 573–80, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2265.2008.00448.x; and Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 36, 54–67, 80, 85–98, 103–6, 174–93.

[21] Cf. Robert S. Weathers, "Dualism or Holism? A Look at Biblical Anthropology, Ethics, and Human Health," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 35, no. 2 (June 1983): 80–83.

10. Paralysis and Nostalgia

Because of the changes and challenges above, institutional leaders have been preoccupied with problem-solving in the aftermath of change and have not had sufficient energy or imagination to think and plan creatively about the opportunities of the present and the future. They bring assumptions about buildings, budgets, and measures of success that may be irrelevant and potentially counterproductive in the world today, not to mention the world five, ten, or fifty years from now. As leaders and congregants alike feel this stress, many have given up on adaptation and have chosen regression instead, nostalgically dreaming of a golden age. This nostalgia makes them form alliances with conservative or regressive political leaders who promise to bring them back to a set of conditions that were more hospitable to their familiar ways of thinking and living. (GCA)

Conclusion

I am among those who hoped that a renewal movement could arise across the many sectors of Christianity that would address these issues. Such a movement would practice a non-authoritarian and decentralized understanding of Christian faith. It would soberly and deeply acknowledge our betrayal of our Jewish founder's prime directive of non-violent, non-discriminatory love, and it would re-embrace revolutionary love as our *raison d'être*, including a love for the earth upon which we all depend. In particular, it would mobilize to help create a post-imperial, post-colonial, anti-racist, and post-supremacist world. It would work with a spirit of humility in light of its past public and personal failings and would enter into deep dialogue and collaboration with the scientific community, working for the common good. It would take decisive steps to re-allocate current institutional resources and foster a spirit of hope.

Although I still believe such a renewal movement is possible, I now lean toward the likelihood that some sort of collapse—or singularity—will occur, and something new will arise from institutional Christianity's ashes and rubble (at worst) or its confusion and paralysis (at best). If this expectation is accurate, what we anticipate is less a matter of renewal and more a matter of resurrection. Or to change the metaphor, we do not see ourselves in a temporary cold snap in the middle of a long summer. Instead, we are preparing for winter, knowing that spring will come, new leaves and blossoms will replace last year's fallen leaves, and the seeds we plant will grow once again.

Drawing from the principle of "no independent origination," we are less likely to see the future as predictable and certainly not as predetermined because we ourselves make choices that change the conditions in which the future will take shape. For that reason, we feel empowered, as protagonists with 7.2 billion other human beings in our shared story. Thus, we seek to align our efforts for the common good, knowing that "the common good" is always an ideal that we are seeking to understand more clearly, even as we seek it. This understanding, though hopeful in the long run, is neither a triumphalist nor complacent stance in the short run. In fact, this understanding is itself a condition that should engender a sense of sobriety, urgency, dedication, and care; or, in the words of the New Testament, a spirit of empowerment, love, and a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alumkal, Antony. *Paranoid Science: The Christian Right's War on Reality*. New York: New York University Press, 2017. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1ggjjcz.

Anderson, Ray S. *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006.

Bediako, Kwame. *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture Upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modern Africa*. 1999. Regnum Studies in Mission. Reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011.

Cannon, Mae Elise, Lisa Sharon Harper, Troy Jackson, and Soong-Chan Rah. *Forgive Us: Confessions of a Compromised Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

Carroll, James. *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, a History*. New York: Mariner Books, 2002.

Cavey, Bruxy. *The End of Religion: Encountering the Subversive Spirituality of Jesus*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2007.

Chinn, Ewing. "Nāgārjuna's Fundamental Doctrine of *Pratītyasamutpāda*." *Philosophy East and West* 51, no. 1 (January 2001): 54–72. https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2001.0005.

Cox, Harvey. *The Future of Faith*. New York: HarperOne, 2009.

Dillon, John. "Logos and Trinity: Patterns of Platonist Influence on Early Christianity." In *The Philosophy in Christianity*, edited by Godfrey Vesey. Royal Institute of Philosophy Lecture Series 25, 1–13. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0957042x00011214.

Donovan, Vincent J. *The Church in the Midst of Creation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989.

Gaston, Thomas E. "The Influence of Platonism on the Early Apologists." *Heythrop Journal: A Bimonthly Review of Philosophy and Theology* 50, no. 4 (July 2009): 573–80. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2265.2008.00448.x.

Howard, Kenneth W. *Excommunicating the Faithful: Jewish Christianity in the Early Church*. 3rd ed. Germantown, MD: FaithX Press, 2013.

———. "The Religion Singularity: A Demographic Crisis Destabilizing and Transforming Institutional Christianity." *International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society* 7, no. 2 (2017): 77–93. http://dx.doi.org/10.18848/2154-8633/cgp/v07i02/77-93.

Lodahl, Michael E. "Christo-Praxis: Foundations for a Post-Holocaust Ethical Christology." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 30, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 213–25.

Mansfield, Stephen. *Choosing Donald Trump: God, Anger, Hope, and Why Christian Conservatives Supported Him*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017.

McLaren, Brian D. *The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World's Largest Religion Is Seeking a Better Way to Be Christian*. New York: Convergent Books, 2016

———. *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions That Are Transforming the Faith*. Pbk. ed. New York: HarperCollins, 2011.

O'Brien, Barbara. "The Principle of Dependent Origination in Buddhism." ThoughtCo. April 5, 2018. https://www.thoughtco.com/dependent-origination-meaning-449723.

Olson, Roger E. *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999.

Postell, Seth. "The Relevance of Jewish Identity for Ecclesiology." *Faith and Mission* 21, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 5–21.

Relevant. "No, That New Study Doesn't Debunk the Stat About 80 Percent of White Evangelicals Voting for Trump." October 18, 2018. https://relevantmagazine.com/culture/politics-culture/no-that-new-study-doesnt-debunk-the-stat-about-80-percent-of-white-evangelicals-voting-for-trump/.

Seybold, Kevin S. "A Cultural Cognition Perspective on Religion Singularity: How Political Identity Influences Religious Affiliation." *Socio-Historical Examination of Religion and Ministry* 1, no. 1 (2019): 21–28, https://doi.org/10.33929/sherm.2019.vol1.no1.03.

Wallace, Mark I. "The New Green Christianity: Why the Church Is Vital to Saving the Planet." *Word and World* 28, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 75–85.

Weathers, Robert S. "Dualism or Holism? A Look at Biblical Anthropology, Ethics, and Human Health." *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 35, no. 2 (June 1983): 80–83.

Zahnd, Brian. *A Farewell to Mars: An Evangelical Pastor's Journey Toward the Biblical Gospel of Peace.* Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2014.

———. *Postcards from Babylon: The Church in American Exile*. St. Joseph, MO: Spello Press, 2019.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Brian D. McLaren** is an author, speaker, activist, and public theologian. He is an Auburn Senior Fellow and a leader in the Convergence Network, through which he is developing an innovative training/mentoring program for pastors, church planters, and lay leaders called Convergence Leadership Project. McLaren works closely with the Center for Progressive Renewal, the Wild Goose Festival, and the Fair Food Program's Faith Working Group. His most recent joint project is an illustrated children's book (for all ages) called *Cory and the Seventh Story*.

MORE FROM THE AUTHOR
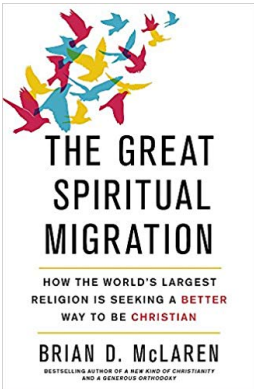
The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World's Largest Religion Is Seeking a Better Way to Be Christian
(2016, Convergent Books)

Brian D. McLaren
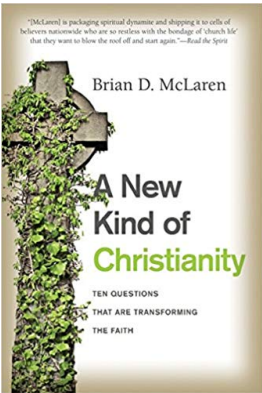
***A New Kind of Christianity:
Ten Questions That Are Transforming the Faith*** (2010, HarperOne)

Brian D. McLaren